

THE CHAMPIONS



It's all over, the Wanderers are champions again and delighted Wycombe fans hoist Tony Horseman, one of their favourites, shoulder high. 'Bodger' could not play in the vital match because of injury. And on the right Keith Searle kisses the boot that scored the championship winning goal on Saturday. Pictures by Bob Mead.

● FOOTBALL. Wycombe Wanderers beat Dagenham 1-0 by an 85th-minute goal from Keith Searle to retain the Rothmans Isthmian League Championship and collect the £1,000 sponsorship award.

Wycombe finished level on points with Enfield, but kept the title on 0.10 of a goal. Their average was 3.10 against Enfield's 3.00.



WYCOMBE WANDERERS have done it again. Thanks to an 85th minute goal from their centre forward Keith Searle, the Blues clinched their fourth Isthmian League title in an amazing five years, when they pipped Dagenham 1-0 at Loakes Park on Saturday.

This is the second successive year Wycombe have won the title under Rothmans' sponsorship. And Saturday's triumph will swell their coffers by nearly £2,000.

There's £1,000 for winning the title plus another £360 for winning nine league matches by a three-clear-goal margin. On top of that, there's between £300-£400 coming their way from the

By STUART
EARP

sportsmanship pool for good conduct. Wycombe have had only one player hooked this season.

Add that to the £12,000 or so they received from their historic F.A. Cup run and the total is approaching £15,000 for a season's work — not bad for an amateur club.

But the Wanderers were kept waiting a mighty long time against Dagenham on Saturday. We knew they had to win to clinch the championship on goal average from Enfield — and they had to do it without conceding a goal.

In the end Keith Searle, the Blues' centre forward, scored the £1,000 goal with only five minutes left. The fans, almost 4,000 of them, went wild at the final whistle and invaded the pitch to greet the champions. Tony Horseman, sporting a light and dark blue beret, was hoisted onto their shoulders and got a hero's reception. Manager Brian Lee, who has the best record in the Isthmian League since Leytonstone took the title five years out of six from 1946-52, joined the supporters with his assistant John Reardon.

With the champagne flowing freely in the dressing rooms afterwards, Wycombe's hero Keith Searle, went though that match winning goal. "Steve Peacock took it which threw me on the top side. They were too slow in reacting and I let it bounce and then hit it. It must be the most important goal of my life and I was glad to put one of their 'keepers' — he played like a man possessed!"

Manager Brian Lee said he wasn't too worried when the match entered its final stages. "As long as we carried on believing in ourselves, I thought it would come good," he said.

Wanderers will receive their championship trophy tonight (Tuesday) when they take on the Rest of the League XI at Loakes Park.